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IDOT, ISP Kick Off You Drink & Drive. You Lose Campaign as New Law to Combat Drunk Drivers Gets Set to Take Effect

IDOT, Illinois State Police and the Illinois Secretary of State Demonstrate Ignition Interlock Technology that will lock down impaired drivers

CHICAGO— Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) and Illinois State Police officials announced at a news conference today details about the *You Drink & Drive. You Lose* campaign and efforts to keep impaired drivers off the streets this holiday season. They also discussed the new law that requires a Breath Alcohol Ignition Interlock Device (BAIID) to be installed for first-time DUI offenders, which is set to take effect January 1, 2009.

“While traffic deaths in Illinois have declined in recent years, we are still working diligently to keep drivers safe on the road from impaired drivers,” said IDOT Secretary Milton R. Sees. “Drunk driving is a disturbing trend that we continue to work hard to reverse, and the new BAIID program will assist us to do just that.”

Illinois Secretary of State Jesse White’s office will administer the program. Senator John Cullerton (D-Chicago), State Representative Robert Molaro (D-Chicago) and Representative John D’Amico (D-Chicago) sponsored the legislation. The law mandates that all first-time DUI offenders who wish to continue driving must obtain a monitoring device driving permit and install a BAIID device in their vehicle. The initiative was also supported by Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD).

“This is a new and innovative approach to deal with a very serious traffic safety issue,” said Illinois Secretary of State Jesse White. Far too many people are killed and injured each year by drunk drivers. This law uses technology to target DUI offenders in an effort to make our roads safer, while posing no inconvenience to the vast majority of Illinoisans who are safe and responsible drivers. Most importantly, this law will save lives.”

"The holidays are a special time of the year when families and friends gather to celebrate and reflect upon their good fortunes," said ISP Director Larry G. Trent. "The State Police is thankful that during 2008, the safety belt compliance rate reached 90.5 percent and roadways are safer this year as fatalities are significantly declining once again."

The new law signifies anyone arrested for DUI beginning at midnight on January 1, 2009 will be required to install this device if they want driving relief during the length of their driver's license suspension. In addition, the new law requires the person to submit a breath test every time they wish to start their vehicle and also at periodic intervals after their vehicle has been started. Illinois becomes one of just six states mandating BAIID use by first-time offenders.

At today's news conference, the BAIID device was demonstrated along with the effects of alcohol impairment at a "wet lab" held in Chicago. A wet lab is a controlled environment in which a person actually consumes alcohol to a level of 0.08 BAC (the illegal limit in Illinois), demonstrating the real-life effects of alcohol on an individual's motor skills.

IDOT is supporting the *You Drink & Drive. You Lose* campaign and the new law by providing nearly \$1 million in federal highway safety funds. These funds allow state, county and local law enforcement agencies to conduct stepped-up impaired driving patrols. IDOT will assist with enforcement efforts by unveiling a new "*You Drink & Drive. You Lose*" commercial along with two new public service announcements.

The *You Drink & Drive. You Lose*. crackdown begins December 19 and runs through January 4, 2009. For more information about impaired driving in Illinois, log onto www.drivesoberillinois.org.